

The Picket Guard.

"All quiet along the Potomac," they say.
 "Except now and then a stray picket is shot, as he walks on his beat, to and fro.
 By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
 'Tis nothing; a private or two, now and then.
 Will not count on the news of the battle!
 Not an officer lost—only one of the men.
 Moaning out, all alone, the death rattle."
 All quite along the Potomac to-night,
 Where the soldiers lie peacefully dreaming:
 Their tents in the rays of the clear autumn moon,
 On the light of the watch-fire gleaming.
 A tremulous sigh, as the gentle night-wind
 Through the forest leaves softly is creeping;
 While staves up above, with their glittering eyes,
 Keep guard for the army fast sleeping,
 There's only the sound of the lone sentry's tread
 As he tramps from the rock to the fountain.
 And he thinks of the two in the low trundle bed,
 Far away in the cot on the mountain.
 His musket falls slack; his face, dark and grim,
 Grows gentle with memories tender,
 As he mutters a prayer for the children asleep,
 For their mother—may Heaven defend her!
 The moon seems to shine just as brightly as then,
 That night when the love yet unspoken
 Lapped up to his lips—when low, murmured vows
 Were pledged to be ever unbroken.
 Then, drawing his sleeve roughly over his eyes,
 He dashes off tears that are welling
 And gathers his gun closer up to its place,
 As if to keep down the heart-swell-ing.
 He passes the fountain, the blasted pine tree—
 The footstep is lagging weary:
 Yet onward he goes, through the broad belt of light,
 Toward the shades of the forest so dreary
 Hark! Was it the night wind that rustled the leaves?
 Was it moonlight so wondrously flashing?
 It looked like a rifle: "Hal! Mary, good by!"
 And the life-blood is ebbing and splashing.
 All quite along the Potomac to-night—
 No sound save the rush of the river:
 While soft falls the dew on the face of the dead—
 The picket's off duty forever,
 Mrs. Howland, in American Tribune.

INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

A True Story of the Execution of Two Union Deserters at Verenna, Va.

It was in the fall of 1864, at the time of high bounties, substitutes and drafted men. The command I was serving with at that time had lately had its thinned out ranks filled to its proper quota by conscripts and substitutes. Bounty-jumping and desertion had become a science that began to empty the ranks in the field almost as quickly as disease and lead. Out of the little army at Verenna some 20 deserted in one night, and the following night 18 more.

It became evident that something had to be done to stop it. The officers must find out whether the conscripts deserted to the south or escaped north. All officers of the picket line were ordered to keep a sharp lookout for tricks, while all transport captains were ordered to look out for stowaways.

Every morning about day-break supposed southern deserters gave themselves up to the union pickets. They were then marched to headquarters, where they took the oath of allegiance to the union and were sent

north. It chanced one morning that a captain of the union picket line recognized one of the confederate deserters as a man of his own company. He saw at once how desertions had been conducted so successfully.

The soldier, conscript or substitute, would crawl through the union picket line at night and manage to swap or buy southern clothing from the confederate pickets. Then, when dressed as a Johnnie, he would lie in concealment between the two lines, and at daylight give himself up as a confederate deserter, take the oath of allegiance, and be sent north, where he would be free to take a thousand dollars or more, as a substitute, or, under a false name, take a big bounty and watch for the first opportunity to desert again.

The captain who had recognized one of his own company in confederate uniform informed the judge advocate general of the army, who quickly gave orders for commanding officers of companies to come to headquarters, where the deserters were held, to see how many could be recognized as union soldiers. A large number of deserters were detected, some of whom were proved to be bounty jumpers as well. They were put under arrest and tried for desertion.

It chanced that two of them belonged to my command. I shall call them by the fictitious names of Wier and Johnson. The letters of these two men were intercepted by the court-martial. They were found to be guilty of former desertions and bounty jumping. Both were sentenced to be shot. The time and place of the executions were fixed by a division general order. The division was ordered to march to the place of execution—form a half hollow square and witness the execution as a warning.

The day arrived and the division marched with the prisoner to a large field, a short distance from the camping ground. On a slight elevation was an oak tree, under it a pile of fresh earth thrown out of a grave, while in front of the earth were two red hospital coffins. As the division formed a square, with its hollow side towards the tree, the prisoners were marched around the inside of it, while the band played the death march. As they gained the coffins, clerical aid was offered them by the chaplain, but refused. Wier had a hangman's cap drawn over his head, and sat on his coffin with his back to the firing party. Johnson asked permission to stand and face the firing party. The request was granted.

Then the firing party of ten men detailed to do the shooting took their place at the head of the square and inside of it. The guns were all loaded secretly by one man and handed to the firing party. One gun was loaded with a blank cartridge, so that none of the party knew that his gun contained a ball. The orders to "take aim" and "fire" were given by the motion of an officer's sword. Johnson placed his hand to his heart and asked the party to take good aim. Before the report of the muskets rang around the hollow square the two deserters had paid the penalty of death.

Two weeks after the execution it fell to my lot to open and answer one of Johnson's letters. It came from a widowed mother

who resided in a little town in the state of New York. It was so full of parental affection and good Christian advice that I had not the courage to tell of her son's true fate. I wrote her as consolingly as I could and told her that her son was one of the soldier dead.

During the late war incidents of this kind were very rare. But there were many cases where soldiers, for desertion and other acts considered a crime during a time of war, were sent to the Rip Raps and to Dry Tortugas with ball and chain.—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

Received The Plum.

Elery Farmer, of LaGrange, First Congressional District, outstripped his twenty-six competitors and the plum, the West Point Cadetship was awarded him.

The Passing Year.

The old year is passing, dying; a little longer and it will hide itself in the grave of the gliding centuries that in long procession have marked the march of time. Few there are whose mental condition is so dull and spiritless that without emotion they can bid adieu to the past and enter upon a new era with all its possibilities of weal or woe. And to the really wise, the most interesting and profitable of all reflections are those most connected with self and its relations. All around us is life, multitudinous, multitudinous; so wonderful in its manifestations that it might easily charm us with its great movement; but self, self, claims, and justly claims, the hour and we lose sight of all except ourself. The past with its joys, and too often, alas! with its tears, stands like a parting guest, reluctant on the threshold and will not permit us at once to turn the new leaf of life's history which lies before us. But we must let it go. Its hopes and fears have crystallized into realities and are but memories of bliss or bane, that grow faint or fainter still, and whether one or the other, they are ended now, except as like the faint odor of dead flowers in the empty and silent banquet hall, they feebly recall the past, so that with a tear for its buried hopes and fancies, and a thrill of thanksgiving for its mercies, we turn away to face the dim, uncertain future into which we must take our way.—St. Louis Christian Advocate.

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Oysters, Raw, Fried or Stewed.

Celery, the whitest and most brittle on the market.

Bakery

That Turns Out the BEST of Bread, Cakes and Pies.

We Cooked

And Exquisite Meals or Luncheons at all Hours.

FRESH FRUITS, CONFECTIONS, CIGARS AND

TOBACCOS, AT

GEO. MOESSNER

Humorous.

The Ichthyometer—Poets, sir, are born.—The Editor.—Not in the last 50 years.—Indianapolis Journal.

Finding Him Out.—"There's character in the hat a man buys." "There's more character in the way he pays for it."—Chicago Record.

"So Alice has decided finally to marry an officer?" "Yes, she captured him in what she positively declares to be her last engagement."—Brooklyn Life.

"Dickie doesn't like his school this year." "What's the trouble?" "He says his teacher lets all the other boys except him sit by girls."—Detroit Free Press.

Exchange No Robbery.—"No, Bobby, be a good boy and let papa hear you say your prayer." "All right; then you lemme hear you say yours."—Chicago Record.

"Some hired girls are very obliging don't you think so?" "Oh, yes. Our is so obliging, in fact, that she obliges us to do just about as she dictates."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

War Fashions—Laura—"Papa, they are going to introduce military figures in the german this winter." Mr. Figg—"I presume that means an increase in your appropriation bills."—Indianapolis Journal.

Punctured.—Sprocket—"Had my tire punctured this morning." Brocket—"You don't say so? How did it happen?" Sprocket—"Riding in a strange country and ran against the forks of a road."—Toronto World.

Student—"Suppose a burglar should break into a lawyer's house and get off with some of his stuff." Professor—"It is a supposal case." Student—"Could the burglar be convicted of receiving stolen goods."—Town Topics.

Histon—"Hereafter I hope I shall know enough to let well enough alone." Wiston—"What is the trouble now?" Histon—"I wrote a slashing article for the paper and I was as happy as a clam, but I was fool enough afterward to read the reply to it. Then I felt like a fool."—Boston Transcript.

TRY.

"If at first you don't succeed, Try, try again."

Everything now is hard work, but a little "try" ointment rubbed on the hand and worked into the heart makes all things easy.

Can't do it sticks in the mud, but Try soon drags the wagon out of the rut. The fox said Try and he got away from the hounds. The bees said Try and they turned flowers into honey. The sun said Try and the spring soon threw Jack Frost out of the saddle. No hill is too steep for Try to climb, nor clay too stiff for Try to break, no field too wet for Try to drain, no hole too big for Try to mind. What man has done, man can do, and what has never been may be.

Ploughmen have got to be gentlemen, cobblers have turned their lapstones into gold, and tailors have sprouted into Members of Parliament. Tuck up your sleeves young Hopeful and go at it.

The sun shines for all the world. Believe in God, stick to hard work and mountains will be removed.

Don't be whining about not having a fair start. The more you have to begin with, the less you will have at the end. Mon-

ey you earn yourself is much brighter and sweeter than any you get out of dead men's bags.

As for the place you are cast in, don't find fault with that. You need not be a horse because you were born in a stable. If a bull tossed a man of mettle sky high he would drop down in a good place. A hard working young man with his wits about him will make money where others do nothing but lose it.—John Ploughman.

Personal and Literary.

The following lines were recently found written in the visitors' book of the cottage at Alloway, where Robert Burns was born:

Creation primal stands God's greatest feat,
 His next when He His Son sent to this earth,
 His next when He, man's genius to complete,
 Ordained that Burns should in this cot have birth.

"Through Persia on a Side-saddle," is a new book by Ella C. Sykes, the only white woman who has ever visited Kerman and Belachistan.

A prominent publisher says that there are more copies of Ik Marvel's "Reveries of the Bachelor" sold in American than of any other book, except the Bible.

Mark Twain was asked by a young girl at an evening party in London, for a remedy for writer's cramp, and he gravely assured her that beefsteak, "broiled and taken internally," cured the kind of cramp he had.

Col. Van B. Wisker, now a resident of Sedalia, Mo., was during 1857-58 English instructor to Alphonso XII., father of the present king of Spain. The Order of Christina was conferred on him by the queen in recognition of his services.

Frank E. Kirby, who, during the Spanish war, rendered such valuable service by examining and reporting upon the qualifications of vessels offered to the government, was the man who introduced metal ships upon the great lakes.

The duke of Argyle is passionately fond of soup, which he regards as the panacea for most of the ills of humanity. Whenever he is about to make an important speech, a can of soup specially prepared at home is sent down to the house and warmed up for the occasion.

From Harry Weise.

I will take a few of my precious moments to address you a few lines. This p. m. is as beautiful as a sunny day in August. We have just returned from drill; we are learning to drill by the bugle calls, but it seems like it will be a failure. Our company is in the best regiment and our officers are all very kind to us. We are comfortably quartered, have spring bunks and plenty of food to eat. I will give you a bill of fare of our Xmas dinner: Turkey, cranberries, potatoet, (mashed), sweet potatoes, gravy, apples, 3 kinds of cake and plenty of good coffee. We feasted like a lot of kings. Pay day will soon be here and the usual guard house scenes will be before our eyes again. The Atlanta Peace Jubilee was a grand success. It was headed by the 5th regimental band and followed by Co. I which is the best company. Mess call has just blown so I will close. I am enjoying the best of health. With best wishes, I remain,

Yours Resp.

HARRY B. WEISE,

Fort McPherson, Ga.

Co. I, U. S. army.